Letter No. 24 (*Revenue*), *dated India Office, London,* 28*th February* 1895, *from the Right Honorable H. H. Fowler, Secretary of State for India, to His Excellency the Right Honorable the Governor-General of India in Council.*

My Lord,—With reference to Your Excellency's letter No. 47 (Medical), dated the 11th September 1894, I forward copy of a letter* from Dr. Mueller, containing further remarks and suggestions concerning the trial of his strychnine treatment for snakebite.

* Dated 10th December 1894.

2. I observe that you have directed that further trials of Dr. Mueller's method of treatment should be made.

Yackandandah (*Victoria*), *the* 10*th December* 1894.

To the Right Honorable Hr H. Fowler, Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India.

Sir,—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt, through His Excellency Governor the Earl of Hopetown, of copy of a letter, dated the 14th September 1894, from the Indian Government to you, concerning my method of treating snakebite by strychnine injections, together with reports from Indian Local Governments and Administrations on the results of the trials of this method made by your order in consequence of my memorial to Her Majesty the Queen.

Whilst expressing my very great obligation to you for these highly interesting documents, I may be permitted to make a few remarks on their contents which, for the satisfactory elucidation of so important a subject, I feel to be incumbent on me and urgently called for.

Though the successes of my method in India greatly outnumber its comparatively few failures, I fully agree with the Indian Government that the information obtained is not conclusive, and that further trials are desirable.

In these trials, however, a more uniform and strict adherence to the method should be insisted on, which, founded on Australian experience, has been distinctly and clearly laid down by me in previous communications.

This is a point of paramount importance and no failures can fairly be counted against it, in which this most indispensable condition has not been complied with.

The antidote must be injected promptly and according to symptoms in more or less large doses, until distinct and unmistakeable strychnia symptoms have been produced.—Small doses only irritate the nerve centres, prostrated by the snake-venom, and engender a tendency to convulsions, not to speak of the precious time which is lost by them. The correctness of this rule is clearly proven by the success of the gentlemen who complied with it, and the failure of those who disregarded it. On analysing the reports I find that the native section of the medical profession in India has manifested a much greater readiness to fall in with my views, than has been shown by the Europeans. Many of the latter appear to cling to obsolete views of the blood-poisoning effect of snake-venom and cannot reconcile themselves to the large doses which are an essential feature of my method, nor to the complete and rapid cures effected by it.

Exactly the same opposition was offered to me in Australia, but I quickly overcame it by taking upon myself the responsibility of authorizing the sale of antidote cases to the public with printed directions for use issued by me. The settlers in the bush largely availed themselves of these cases, and applying the antidote according to directions, were uniformly successful, even more so than some of the medical men, who disregarded them. The result is, that strychnine is now the recognised antidote to snake-poison, and that deaths from the latter are of comparatively rare occurrence in Australia.

The alleged dangers of the treatment are purely imaginary, for the effects of strychnine on the muscular system are too conspicuous to be overlooked and invariably signalise a stage in the treatment, in which the antidote is no longer required. They pass off quickly, and the patient recovers almost immediately, excepting in old cases, where the treatment has been unduly delayed and organic changes have taken place in the nerve centres, which the antidote cannot cope with. A case in point, showing the enormous quantity of strychnine that may be injected with impunity in cobra bite, is that reported by Surgeon-Major Thomas of Chingleput, who within a few hours injected three grains of strychnine and saved his patient. It is more than probable that even if the strychnine treatment does not receive official sanction in India, it will nevertheless be adopted since,—thanks to the measures adopted by you,—it has now become generally known, and that it will become as popular with the natives as it is now with the Australian bushmen * * * * * *

No. A. MUELLER, M.D.

COPY, with extract of enclosure, forwarded to ..... for information, in continuation of Home Department letter No. ...., dated ..... 1894.

By order,

HOME DEPT. (MEDICAL);
Simla, the .... May 1895.

C. H. A. HILL,
Offg. Under-Secy. to the Govt. of India.